

REVISED DRAFT – 11/16/2011

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOREST SERVICE

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION
SERVICE**

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

REGARDING

DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

TO

NON-INDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FOREST LANDOWNERS

IN

WASHINGTON STATE

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made and entered into by and between the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS); the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) ; the Washington State Association of Conservation Districts (WACD), Washington State University Extension (WSU); and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), hereinafter referred to as “the Parties.”

I. INTRODUCTION

Nationally, non-industrial private forest landowners control more forest land than all other ownership types combined. Even in Washington, with extensive public and industrial forest holdings, an estimated 215,000 non-industrial private owners control the fate of 5.8 million acres of forest and other associated rural lands, which provide extensive environmental and economic benefits to the state's citizenry. The federal and state governments have long recognized the importance of protecting these forests from harm and promoting their long term retention and sustainable management. The Parties to this memorandum all play a significant role in helping landowners to achieve this goal.

II. PURPOSE OF MEMORANDUM

This Memorandum of Understanding, regarding delivery of programs and services to non-industrial private forest landowners in Washington State, is made and entered into by the above-identified Parties to:

- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and authorities of each of the Parties
- Improve coordination regarding strategic planning, establishment of priorities, program development, and deployment of resources
- Facilitate coordination to identify and address landscape-level forest health issues and other forest resource concerns
- Improve landowner awareness of, and participation in, programs and services provided by the Parties and other resource providers
- Improve coordination, cooperation, efficiency, and effectiveness in the delivery of programs and services
- Facilitate sharing of information, resources, technology, and expertise
- Facilitate a coordinated response to landowner assistance needs following significant natural disaster events
- Improve knowledge and skills of non-industrial private forest landowners and the natural resource professionals who assist them
- Promote the long-term retention, health, and sustainable management, of non-industrial private forest lands and enhance the environmental and economic contributions which accrue to society there from

This Memorandum is intended to:

- Complement the nationwide forestry Memorandum of Understanding between the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and USDA Forest Service (USFS) executed September 2008.

- Support the 2010 Statewide Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy, the 2012 NRCS State Resource Assessment, and subsequent versions or revisions thereto
- Supersede and replace the previous Washington State Interagency Forestry Memorandum dated November 1993.

III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each of the Parties has authority and responsibility for directly or indirectly providing support for, or delivery of, programs and services to non-industrial private forest landowners in Washington State. These programs and services are intended to encourage long-term retention, health, and sustainable management of non-industrial forest lands and to enhance the environmental and economic benefits which accrue to society there from.

USDA Forest Service

The USDA Forest Service, through its State and Private Forestry (S&PF) mission area, provides expert advice, technology, and financial assistance to help landowners and resource managers sustain the Nation's forests and protect communities and the environment from wildland fires.

Through grants and cooperative agreements, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, and other partners, deliver the majority of this landowner assistance in the state of Washington through three S&PF "umbrella" program areas that receive annual federal appropriations: Forest Health Management; Cooperative Fire Protection; and Cooperative Forestry. In the delivery of these programs, The Forest Service provides federal authority, programmatic guidance and standards, fiscal and technical support, and oversight and accountability.

Forest Health Management assistance includes conducting survey, suppression, prevention, and management activities on native and non-native forest insect, disease, and invasive plant pests.

Cooperative Fire Protection programs focus on the need to reduce the threat of wildland fires in wildland-urban interface areas. Assistance is provided to complete Community Wildfire Protection Plans and to implement high priority hazard mitigation projects identified in those plans, including those on non-industrial private forest lands.

Cooperative Forestry programs provide technical and financial assistance to help landowners manage their forest lands, including the development and implementation of long-term, multi-resource Forest Stewardship Plans.

The Forest Service also operates a system of Forest and Range Experiment stations which conduct research to assist land owners and managers.

Additionally, the Forest Service manages the federal lands in the National Forest System. National Forest lands often border, or are located in close proximity to, non-industrial private

forest lands, thereby providing the potential opportunity for management practices which have benefits beyond ownership boundaries.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has primary responsibility for Farm Bill conservation programs which provide financial and technical assistance, to help landowners implement resource conservation and improvement practices. NRCS provides this technical and financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial private forest landowners through its local field offices and service centers found throughout the state. Direct technical assistance is provided to these landowners through the NRCS conservation planning process. Through this planning process, NRCS works to identify the landowner's objectives and the resource concerns of the land, then to develop a plan which schedules the implementation of appropriate conservation practices to address those objectives and resource concerns. In addition, NRCS is a source of interdisciplinary expertise for forestry and natural resource conservation.

NRCS works in close cooperation with county Conservation Districts, providing technical expertise to support local work group conservation priorities. NRCS and Conservation District offices are co-located in many localities.

NRCS also administers competitive grant programs which can provide financial support to other entities, including those which assist non-industrial private forest landowners. Other NRCS programs include Soil Survey provides information on forest soils necessary for both planning and practice implementation. The agency also operates Plant Materials Centers which develop technical guides on species selection and use for conservation purposes. Finally, NRCS provides snowpack and water supply forecasting services through its Snowtel Program.

Washington State Conservation Commission

The Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) provides administrative support, coordination, guidance, technical assistance, and fiscal support to local Conservation Districts.

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

The Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) is an independent association of individual Conservation Districts. Individual Conservation Districts identify local resource conservation needs and provide technical assistance to farm, ranch, and non-industrial private forest landowners. Districts partner with the USDA NRCS to provide advice and technical assistance to address these resource conservation needs. WACD operates a nursery which produces conservation plant materials, including forest species, which are sold to landowners through local Conservation Districts.

Washington State University Extension

Washington State University (WSU) is the state's Land Grant University. WSU Extension is part of a national network of Land Grant University Extension Services which are cooperatively funded through a partnership between the US Department of Agriculture, and state and county governments, to bring educational programs and materials to the public through a system of local extension offices in each county staffed by WSU Extension faculty.

WSU Extension has primary responsibility for conducting educational programs, and providing educational materials and resources, for non-industrial private forest landowners and the natural resource professionals who advise them.

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the state's forestry agency. DNR has primary responsibility for delivery of technical assistance to non-industrial private forest landowners and administers a variety of programs which benefit this clientele, most of which are supported, in part or in whole, by USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry funds. These include: Forest Stewardship; Forest Legacy; Forest Health; Wildfire Prevention, Hazard Reduction, and Suppression; Genetic Tree Improvement; and Forest Nursery programs. Additionally, the Department's Small Forest Landowner Office (SFLO) oversees state-funded programs which provide technical and financial assistance to help small forest landowners more effectively cope with the requirements and impacts of extensive, complex state Forest Practices regulations. These programs include: Forest Riparian Easement Program, Family Forest Fish Passage Program, Riparian Open Space Program, and Long Term Forest Practices Applications.

IV. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

To the extent practicable; within such constraints as may be imposed by available resources and legal, policy, procedural, and administrative requirements; the Parties agree to:

- Cooperate to assess natural resource and landowner needs and identify opportunities to address those needs
- Recognize the primary authority and responsibility of other Parties for specific programs and services
- Coordinate amongst the Parties regarding strategic planning, identification of priorities, and focus of landowner assistance resources
- Explore opportunities to coordinate and cooperate regarding landscape level planning and program implementation
- Coordinate with other Parties to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and reduce the potential for redundant, competing, or conflicting efforts
- Provide landowners with information about programs and services available from the other Parties

- Refer landowners to those in other Parties with more appropriate expertise, or access to more appropriate resources, to meet landowner needs
- Inform landowners of the nature and availability of private sector forestry programs, services, and expertise and refer landowners who require assistance outside the scope of services provided by the Parties
- Participate in formal and informal interagency coordination meetings
- Participate in state and local advisory groups of other Parties
- Share technology, technical information, and professional expertise of potential benefit to other Parties and landowners
- Coordinate landowner forest management plan standards and guidelines to help meet the requirements of multiple entities and programs
- Consider opportunities for co-location, or mutual use of facilities and office space, by the Parties
- Explore opportunities to coordinate complementary financial incentive programs amongst the Parties
- Share information of potential use to landowners and their natural resource advisors with the other Parties
- Recognize the contributions of other Parties in publicly distributed information and materials
- Coordinate response to landowner educational, technical, and financial assistance needs following significant natural disaster events
- Support educational programs and training opportunities for landowners and the natural resource professionals who serve them

V. AUTHORITIES OF THE PARTIES

Each of the Parties has specific legal authorities related to forest landowner assistance as identified in federal or state statute, organizational policy, or executive order:

1. The Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, Public Law 103-354, 7 USC 6901-7014
2. Secretary's Memorandum 1010-1, Reorganization of the Department of Agriculture, dated October 20, 1994
3. Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, Public Law 95-313, 16 USC 2101-2114 (As amended through Public Law 171-108, June 16, 2002 and Public Law 110-246, June 18, 2008)
4. Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, Public Law 74-46, 16 USC 590a-f; Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977, Public Law 95-192 16 USC 2001-2009
5. National Association of State Foresters By Laws and Constitution
6. National Association of Conservation Districts By Laws

7. Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation, Presidential Executive Order 13352 of August 26, 2001
8. USDA Department Regulation, 5600-003, USDA Roles in Market –Based Environmental Stewardship, dated December 20, 2006.
9. Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.
10. Extension at 1890 Land Grant Colleges... Sec. 1444 7 USC 3221
11. National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, Public Law 95-113.
12. Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978, Public Law 95-306
13. State Authorizing Legislation for DNR Forest Stewardship Program – RCW 76.13.020
14. State Authorizing Legislation for DNR Small Forest Landowner Office – RCW 76.13.110
15. State Authorizing Legislation for Conservation Districts and Washington Conservation Commission – RCW 89.08

This document identifies areas of mutual interest, understanding, agreement, and intent, however, no contractual or financial obligation shall be incurred by any of the Parties signatory hereto.

This memorandum becomes effective upon the date of the last signatory and remains in effect indefinitely until amended, terminated, or replaced by the Parties.

VI. APPROVAL SIGNATURES

Peggy Polichio, Director	Date
State and Private Forestry, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region	

Roylene Rides At The Door, State Conservationist	Date
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	

Fred Colvin, Chair	Date
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Washington Conservation Commission

Chris Herron, President

Date

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Randy Baldree, Interim Acting Director

Date

Washington State University Extension

Aaron Everett, State Forester

Date

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

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